

VZCZCXRO5908
PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0038 0111715
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 111715Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5036
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1366
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1197
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0679
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 000038

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR
S/CRS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS TO OAS
TREASURY TO J. LEVINE
COMMERCE FOR S. SMITH

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: HAITI CARICOM OFFICE READY TO DISCUSS CSME

REF: A. 06 SECSTATE 201767
[1](#)B. 06 PORT AU PRINCE 2373
[1](#)C. 06 PORT AU PRINCE 2060

[1](#)1. (U) Marie Michele Rey, the appointed head of the new Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and other trade negotiations office, confirmed Haiti's commitment to moving CARICOM's Single Market Economy (CSME) forward. Though private sector sources indicate that the CSME may be more trouble than it is worth, Rey stressed that in order to move toward full CARICOM integration, Haiti will have to implement the CSME. Rey, who was in the process of physically setting up her new office (ref B), said that in the long run she hoped to have digital video conference (DVC) capabilities, but in the short term, this would not be a possibility. (Note: There are DVC capabilities at the Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank. Rey and Poloff discussed possibly using these facilities for the proposed video conferences in reftel A. End note.)

[1](#)2. (U) Rey said that tariff harmonization will be the biggest obstacle for Haiti; the country has worked hard over a number years to lower the tariffs and raising them would be a step backwards (ref C). Also, since Haiti's CARICOM representational office closed following the departure of former President Aristide almost three years ago, the new office will have a lot of catching up to do, as well as try to advance the CSME. Rey told Poloff that Haiti needs a "public information" program to explain CARICOM and the CSME to the entire population. According to Rey, those working in the informal commercial sector (estimated well over 50 percent) understand regional integration much better than the formal sector workforce, which works primarily with the U.S., Dominican Republic, Canada, Japan and Europe instead of other CARICOM members. If re-integration into CARICOM could somehow involve -- with the eventual goal of integrating and formalizing -- parts of the informal sector, Haiti's chances of moving forward with the CSME increase greatly. Rey suggested that when possible the Dominican Republic should be included in discussions, as Haiti's second largest trading partner and an observing member of CARICOM. Overall, Rey was delighted by the proposal of DVC's to discuss the specifics of the CSME, and to increase regional conversations.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: Rey is energetic and engaged; her

appointment is a positive sign for Haiti's re-integration into CARICOM. Before joining the banking sector, she worked for USAID and the former agency of USIS. Aristide appointed her Minister of Finance twice, in 1991 and 1994. She has known President Preval for eighteen years and has a close working relationship with Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis (to whom her current office answers.)
SANDERSON